

# Postal Himal



QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

NTPSC Homepage (courtesy of Rainer Fuchs) <http://fuchs-online.com/ntpssc>



## Beginning of Mobile Postal Service

photo by Sidhartha M Tuladhar

The information on the side of van is sketched with route of Mobile van no 1. The center of the sketch map read “Operated by Goswara Hulak Office( General Post Office) Mobile Postal Service, Kathmandu Area, route No. 1”. The van operates 10 AM to 5PM.

Number 170

2<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2017



Area	One Year	Three Years	Lifetime
USA/Canada	\$20.00	\$50.00	N/A
PayPal for USA/Canada	\$21.20	\$53.00	
All Others	£18.00 or €22,00	£45.00 or €55.00	N/A
PayPal for All Others	£19.08 or €23,32	£47.70 or €58,30	
Email Only —Everywhere	\$10.00 or £6.00 or €7,50	\$25.00 or £15.00 or €18,75	N/A
PayPal for Email Only	\$10.60 or £6.36 or €7,95	\$26.50 or £15.90 or €19,88	

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**Officer's Corner:** *by Colin Hepper*  
 WESTPEX has come and gone in what is becoming an annual trip for me. It is always a pleasure for me to meet our members from the west coast. Our meeting was well attended this year with Alan Warren giving a power point display on Tibet and Leo with his forgeries. Since the last issue of Postal Himal we had no volunteers for the position as editor and Frank Vignola has agreed to continue to publish this for us with the distribution being handled by Ken Goss and myself.

We are considering applying for participation in WESTPEX as a featured society in 2021. A featured society is a guest society that intends to hold an exhibition as well as meetings at WESTPEX.

Before applying for this we need some firm commitments from our members to exhibit. We must commit to having a minimum of 37 (16 page) frames with a maximum of 80 frames; this in turn would indicate that we need a minimum of four members willing to participate. It would be a great opportunity to advertise our society. It is four years away and we may not be accepted but please let either Ken Goss or myself know if you are willing to participate in this event.

Finally just another reminder to all members that Frank needs to build up a backlog of articles to be able to get the magazine out on time so please try and get some articles to him.



NTPSC meeting participants at Westpex 2017

## NTPSC AUCTION Coming this Fall

The NTSC auction has been delay until September or October this year in order to obtain more material. NTSC members can submit items for consignment. Contact Leo Martyn at [himalayan@att.net](mailto:himalayan@att.net) for more information about consignments.

### Editor's Ramblings:

This is the second issue of Postal Himal that I will be editing. I appreciate all those who have contributed to these issues, and Kenneth Goss for proof reading. And it is these contributors who help make the society a success. We have several interesting articles for this issue and hopefully this will stimulate other NTPSC members to write about interesting items that they find.

### Congratulations!

At the Melbourne 2017 FIAP international exhibition held in Australia in April, three Nepal exhibits earned awards. Rishi Kumar Tulsyan received a vermeil for "The Postal Stationery of Nepal 1887-1959." Large silver went to Bhavya Tulsyan for "The Classic Period of Nepal 1779-1930," and Large silver went to Sweta Shrestha for "Aerogrammes of Nepal."

At the Finlandia 2017 show held in Tampere, Finland in May Bruno Le Peut of France received a vermeil for his "The Sri Pashupati Issues of Nepal."

In September or October we anticipate a society auction coordinated by Leo Martyn, the society auctioneer. Contact Leo Martyn at [Himalaya@att.net](mailto:Himalaya@att.net) for information about consignments.

In April, the society held a meeting at Westpex 2017. Several photographs of the meeting will be included in this newsletter. The photo above of the NTPSC members present at the meeting was forwarded by Bill Janson.



# RETURN TO THIBET

By Edmond Weissberg



Here on the show is a "returned TO Thibet" cover.

Those covers are much more uncommon than the "returned FROM Thibet" ones, which could be easily obtained (and can be, even nowadays) by just purposely writing to an imaginary addressee at a fanciful address in Thibet (1), and provided a "return address" is mentioned on the back flap of the envelope (2).

Well, concerning this cover:

1: - *RECTO*:

- It was sent by P.B. Dhahwa & Sons, Lhasa, to the well-known collector Aaron Binder in the United States, as "registered". (Red ink manuscript endorsement). Quite interestingly and remarkably, the address in New York is: "1250 Franklin Ave."
- It is franked on the front side with four thibetan stamps of the 1933 issue: 1/2 + 2/3 + 4 + 1 Trangka, i.e. a blatant overfranking (6.16 Trangka in all), - still not, but nearly, a full set. (Therefore an obvious hint towards a "philatelic" cover!) At that time, 4 Trangka would have been sufficient for this small cover, (102 mm X 162 mm, which is not a U.S. standard size envelope), and does not appear to have been overweighted. Besides, it is made of plain grayish to yellowish-white paper (not at all "native" thibetan paper), with neither a watermarked nor an embossed trademark. I've tried to check the colours of the stamps against a colour chart (Methuen) - (3). They seemingly

belong to an all mingled period 1941 to 1950. I have plated the 2/3 Trangka as "cliché 7", and the 4 Trangka as "cliché 9", but not the other ones.

- Being adjacent and arranged into square, the stamps were cancelled with only one centrally placed "Hellrigl [T 42] (single circle) Lhasa cancel" (4). They were affixed one against the other, except the two top ones, thus leaving between them a small 2 mm wide vertical space of the envelope itself, on which appears a very faint trace of the cancel.
- There is also a registry label "Waterfall [BR 9]" (5) with a boxed registry handstamp "Waterfall [GE]" (5) - or "Hellrigl [B77]" (4), clearly showing "GYANTSE" on the top line, but not a faint trace of inking showing the word "TIBET" which should have been written underneath on the lower line. Otherwise, there is the usual manuscript notation (in blue ink), confirming the number: "31" of the registration number, and the date of dispatch from Gyantse, i.e. 15 April 1950 (not easily readable on the back - see § 2/ -b) infra).
- There are also some pencil notations, rather undecipherable, but possibly: "Removed / No add", and at bottom: "4/25/50", which is also the date of the second "New York" violet cancel on the back. (see 2/-c) infra). Also, the address has been scored out by a single pencil stroke.
- A remarkable feature of this cover lies in the two

Continued on Page 5



violet single line auxiliary markings: "PARTI (REMOVED.)" and: "RETOUR (RETURN TO WRITER)"

Both are accordingly to U.P.U. regulations, in French and in English. They are rather unusual (no "hand" pointing to a return address, "removed" instead of "moved", and "writer" instead of "sender". Of the second marking, the first letters "R" and partially "E" from "RETOUR" are over the 2/3 Trangka stamp. These markings have been applied prior to the pencil notations (§ 1/-e) *supra*, being under them.

## 2: - **VERSO:**

- There is the manuscript return address of P.B. Dhakwa & Sons, Lhasa, c/o Gorkha Office in Gyantse, Tibet. (However, there's no "Nepalese Flag" [neither drawn, nor printed], of the Dhakwa's commercial trademark).
- The Indian franking: 6 - 1/2 annas, i.e 6 Indian stamps at 1 anna each plus one 1/2 anna British Raj's stamp. (George V & VI stamps were demonetized on 1st October 1954 only). Also: traces of 2 or 3 missing stamps, (the place of one of them being pencil circled), and trace of a cancel (of which only "15" and "T" are legible). [probably: Gyantse Tibet / 15 APR]. At that time, the Indian international rate was, I believe, 7 Annas, or 7 - 1/2 Annas. So, the missing stamps on this cover should be either for 1/2 Annas (= 6 Pies), or 1 Anna (= 12 Pies). Well, the present

stamps were cancelled "Gyantse" (probably Hellrigl B48) - (4) , but they are so faintly applied that only "Gyantse" is legible and "15 APR" just guessable. (6)

- There are two "New York" datestamps:
  - a black oval dated 24 April 1950 "NEW YORK, N.Y. - REG'Y. DIV."
  - and a violet one dated 25 April 1950 "NEW YORK, N.Y. - MORRISANIA STA".
- d) A very legible GYANTSE return cancel dated 14 June 1950 (Hellrigl Type B48 Die 2) (4).

## 3/ - **THE VOYAGE**

- From Lhasa to Gyantse by Thibetan post? (unknown date).
- Arrived Gyantse Thibetan P.O. and handed over to Indian P.O. (unknown date).
- Departed Gyantse Indian P.O. 15 APRIL 1950.
- Arrived New York 24 APRIL 1950.
- Departed New York 25 APRIL 1950 (with "PARTI / RETOUR" mentions).
- Arrived Gyantse Indian P.O. 14 JUNE 1950.
- Returned to Lhasa from Gyantse by Thibetan post??? (unknown date).

## 4/ - **THE DISCREPANCY**

From the study of other "Binder covers", published in philatelic books, or communicated by fellow collectors, it appears that A. Binder moved from: "1250 Franklin Ave." to "1501 Nelson Ave." sometime between 1942 and 1946. So, to use his



former address in 1950 is a mistake. And so, there are several possibilities / propositions:

- a) Dhakwa unintentionally got the wrong address in his address book. And when the letter was returned to him, he sent it back to Binder enclosed in another cover at the right address.
- b) Dhakwa intentionally used the wrong address because Binder requested him to do so. And also, Binder requested Dhakwa to send back to him [Binder], the "returned cover", enclosed inside another cover, this one addressed to his correct address. Just to get a "Returned To Thibet" cover in his collection.
- c) Binder prepared himself the cover (7) - And Binder sent his prepared cover to Dhakwa, enclosed in another cover, requesting him to complete it with Indian stamps and purposely with the erroneous address. (8)  
Afterwards, the procedure was the same as in second part of point b) above, , i.e. to return him the coveted cover.

The facts are now expounded, and despite the Ockam's razor principle, my preference goes to the most intricate third solution n° c). This opinion is just a personal feeling, (there being no factual reason enabling to determine which proposition is the accurate, real, and exact one).

- 1) For example : Mrs So-N'dso - Hotel Asia Intergalactic - 92 Pagoda Avenue - Lhasa - Thibet !
- 2) This ought to be further developed. I have a letter addressed to "The Regent" (a key political figure, would you believe!), but it was nevertheless

returned from the Gyantse British Raj's P.O., instead of being handed to the Thibetan P.O. for further conveyance to his famous addressee in Lhasa ! The explanation is either that: 1/ It was not sent to a "c/o" forwarding agent in Gyantse, or: 2/ No Thibetan stamps were affixed beforehand on the cover by the sender.

- 3) A. Kornerup & J.H. Wanscher: "Methuen Handbook of Colour" - Methuen & Co Ltd., 2nd ed. London 1967.
- 4) Wolfgang C. Hellrigl: "The Postal Markings of Tibet", [Bozen, Italy, 1996, Geoffrey Flack, Vancouver, Canada, 1996].
- 5) Arnold C. Waterfall: "The Postal History of Tibet" - 2nd edition 1981, London, Robson Lowe.
- 6) One can assume it is the same date, i.e. 15 April 1950, matching the blue ink notation as mentioned in § 1/-d).
- 7) At that time, collectors had plenty of thibetan stamps available at home for such a practice (see also: the "Tuladhar covers", with even so called "officials" which weren't probably never affixed in Thibet).
- 8) Even if Binder prepared the cover with his own thibetan stamps, it is Dhakwa who wrote the addresses. I have a 1954 letter (not the cover) from Binder to Gyanaratna in Lhasa, and the handwritings are not the same. And an instructive quotation from this letter will perhaps shed some new light on those practices: "Please send me the 8 Tranka red stamp on envelope I sent you for postmarking - also other envelopes".





## Amlekhganj and the Nepal Railway

by Colin Hepper

The Nepal railway has not been of much interest to the stamp collectors of Nepal as there was nothing like TPO's that are associated with mail going by rail. It is only normally referred to when we look at the postal markings from Amlekhganj when a post office was opened there in 1927 after a narrow gauge railway was opened 16 February 1927 between there and Raxaul on the Nepalese Indian border. The railway possessed 7 steam locomotives, 12 coaches and 82 wagons.

The railway played an eminent role in establishing Amlekhganj from a small village to a town.

Post runners took 1 to 2 days to reach Amlekhganj from Kathmandu and as from 1935 the mail was taken by rail to the border. There is however nothing on the mail to indicate that it travelled by rail.



Double rate cover cancelled with the Amlekhganj Type 1 postmark dated ??/2/10



The two dated postal markings have been well recorded on mail from this office, but the 36mm negative seal shown here was first recorded by Dr. Ramesh Shrestha in 2009. This would be the Amlekhganj post office seal used on correspondence etc. but he does not state if he had seen it used as a postal cancellation.



Official stampless cover cancelled with Amlekhganj Type 2 postmark dated 09/08/20 = 3 January 1953.



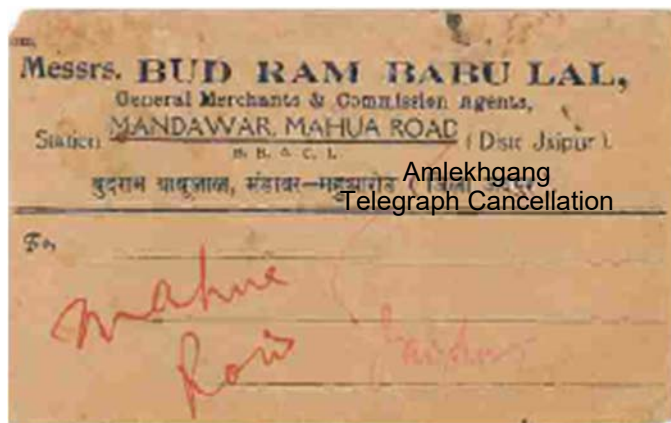
Type 1 Postmark  
In use 1927 - 1932



Type 2 Postmark  
In use 1931 - 1954

Continued on Page 8

## Late Fee Rate by Bruno Le Peut



In the postal guide of 1936, chapter 30 reads:

“Letters and postcards that are brought (to the post office) just before the mail-bags are closed, are accepted only on payment of a “Late Fee” in form of an additional 2-paisa stamp.”

The postal rate of a letter to India was 8 paisa for a single-weight cover and 12 paisa for a double-weight cover. A letter with a late fee should be franked with 10 paisa for a single-weight cover or 14 paisa for a double-weight cover.

I never saw a cover franked with 14 paisa. But I recently bought a cover with a pair of 4 paisa and a 2 paisa stamp. The letter is from Butwal to Jaipur, India, via Bhairahawa Exchange Post Office in Nepal and Nautanwa Bazar in India in April 1941.

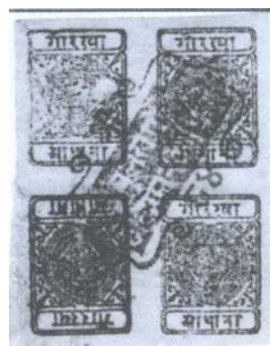
### Amlekhganj and the Nepal Railway continued

Coincidentally at the same time as the railway line opened a telegraph office was also opened. The ornamental type cancellation for the telegraph payments is one of the scarcer types.

The railway remained in service until 1965 when the construction of a modern highway linking Kathmandu to the southern border made it redundant. Until the highway was built, the Amlekhganj Raxaul railway was the only route connecting the capital with India. Prior to that, travelers journeyed over the hills on foot and then by lorry to Amlekhganj where they took the train to India. The need to walk was eliminated after the Tribhuvan Highway linking Kathmandu to Amlekhganj was built in 1956. Amlekhganj does not have the importance that it had in the 1940's and 1950's as transported goods now pass it by on the main highway. The post office is still in operation and presumably uses the standard bilingual postmark on its mail.

So far I have been unable to locate a modern cover posted at Amlekhgang to be able to complete the

postmarks from this office. This however will not be an isolated incident in trying to get modern postmarks as they are becoming extremely scarce to find with electronic mail taking over.



Amlekhgang  
Telegraph Cancellation



Photos from the 2017 NTPSC meeting at Westpex

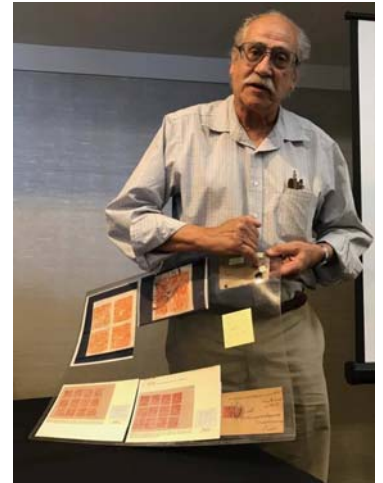
Thank you Alan Warren, Al Zulueta, and Bill Janson



Colin Hepper Chairs the meeting



Alan Warren presents talk on Tibet

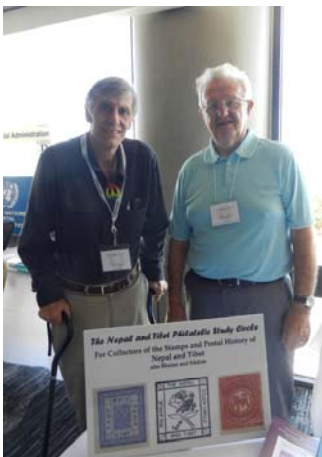


Leo Martyn talks about forgeries



Nepalese game shown by Leo Martyn

← Discussions and perusal of material after the business meeting



Frank Vignola and Colin Hepper at NTPSC table at Westpex.

Sign by Alan Warren

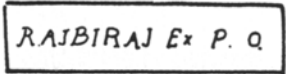


# RAJBIRAJ POST OFFICE

by Colin Hepper



Rajbiraj is a mid-sized municipality in south-eastern Nepal and was established in the 1950's. It is one of the few cities given the status of municipality when Nepal's monarchy was restored in the 1950's. It is the first city of Nepal to be urban planned. It is now the headquarters of Sagarmatha Zone and Saptari District.



The second postmark recorded is still an oblong box but the post office title has now changed to being an exchange post office.



The illustrated envelope is an official registered letter with the Exchange P.O. cancellation. The Biratnagar P.O. receiving postmark is dated September 1962.



I would assume that a post office was first established sometime in the 1950's when the city was being developed. The earliest postmark recorded is a small oblong box with the name Rajbiraj.



The illustrated envelope on the above is not dated but the postal stationery envelope used and the additional stamps used would indicate that it was probably posted in 1959 (the year the additional stamps were issued).



There are no other recorded postmarks from Rajbiraj, other than the standard bi-lingual postmark which would indicate that it had lost its Exchange P.O. status.



## Beginning of Mobile Postal Service

Information and photos by Sidhartha M Tuladhar

Recently I found an interesting piece of News on Mobile Postal Service of Nepal, that was launched on April 28, 2017 in Kathmandu Valley. I saw this news about Mobile service in 29<sup>th</sup> April's two Newspapers- one is Nepali Daily called Gorkhapatra (Government Newspaper in Nepali version) another one in English daily Himalayan Times. I am sending scan of these News Cuttings in separate mail.

Launching the service the Minister for Information and Communications, Surendra Kumar Karki urged the GPO to make the service reliable as well as qualitative. He said the ministry was working to make the postal service lucrative for employment seekers. Mr. Karici added that the service will gradually be expanded to other parts of the country. Three vehicles will be mobilized for the service (from the Himalayan Times).

For quite sometimes people are using less and less the service of postal service due to all the electronic media – email, fiber, facebook, telegrams etc. To make more use of postal service, mobile postal service is initiated, so that people do not have to walk to the post office.

Route 1 vehicle will run from the General Post Office to the Supreme Court via Bansbari Area Post Office, and Dilli Bazar postal plaza.

Route 2 vehicle will run from Lalitpur District Post Office to Patan Industrial Zone.

Route 3 vehicle will start its services from Babarmahal and will reach Baneshwor. Koteshwor and Thimi before concluding its journey at Bhaktapur Post Office.

They have already changed information out the van. (ed. The original markings on the van is shown on the cover of Postal Himal and the van with new information is shown on this page.) This time they have written the routes on the outside the van. They renamed the vans as 1) Kathmandu Area 2) Lalitpur Area and 3) Bhaktapur Area.

Short translation from the Nepali news: Besides the three vehicles, another postal vehicle will proceed from Sundhara Goswara (Location of GPO) – Kalimati – Ravi Bhavan and it will to Sundhara via Singha Durbar (Secretariat) and Sarbochha Adalat (Supreme Court). Mobile vehicle is fully equipped with server for online service as well. The service provided by mobile is equivalent to service of post office. These vehicles will be used for collecting and delivery of letters from different post offices (Ilaka and Atirikta post office). Fully equipped with Solar,

Internet, Billing System, Barcode Reader, Weighing Machine these vehicles will give the service of sales of envelopes, stamps, parcels, etc.



Postal service van with revised information



Employees of the post office who are deputed to the mobile service



On the front of van there numbered in devanagari number 1. On front view of the van, you will see solar panel on the top of van. This solar panel is used to power the computer and electronic weighing machine to weigh Registered letters and packages. This power will used for producing the bill as well.

# EXPRESS MAIL DELIVERY SERVICE

By Colin Hepper

The Postal Services Department commenced operating an express mail delivery service on 12 May 1989 at Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Pokhara, Bhairahawa and Nepalgunj town panchayats.

Customers wishing to send their mail through this service to the six town panchayats were required to submit their mail at the district post offices of Kathmandu, Morang, Parsa, Kaski, Rupandehi and Banke districts. The objective was to deliver the mail within a day of mailing.

Postal material to be posted under express delivery had to be submitted to the counters of the district post offices at Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Pokhara, and Bhairahawa between 10: 15am and 2:00pm and at Banke district post office between 9:00am and 12:00 noon.

Ordinary letters and aerogrammes not exceeding 100 grams could be sent by the express delivery service to the six town panchayats. There was an additional charge of Rs. 1/- in addition to the regular postage charges. Arrangements were made to hand over the mail to the addressee upon his signature and to return the mail to the sender if the address is

not found.

Postal materials sent to places outside of the town panchayat limits were delivered through ordinary mail.

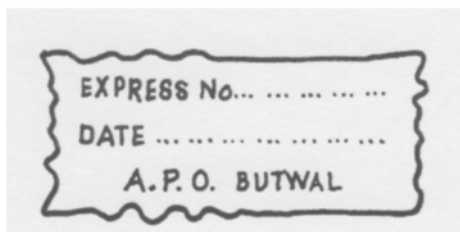
There are two types of Express Delivery systems (called 'Drut'). One is the official express service organised by the post office and the other is a private express delivery service registered by the government.

The post office mail has a number of different handstamps. The basic one being a single line handstamp reading 'Express Delivery Service' ('Drut Delivery Sewa').

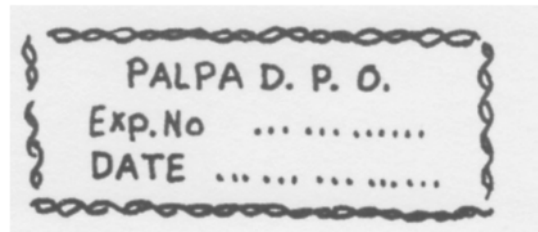
In addition to this handstamp there is usually a further handstamp giving the name of the post office, the delivery number and date. These can be found in both Devanagari and English.

In January 1995 commenced an international express mail service to the Maldives and by December 1999 had extended the service to go to twenty five countries. These are listed in the Appendices Section.

## Official Post Office Service All English Cachets



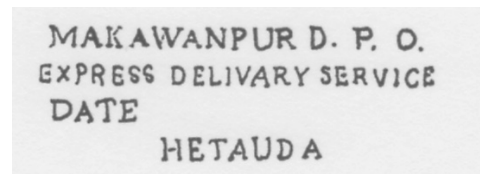
Butwal



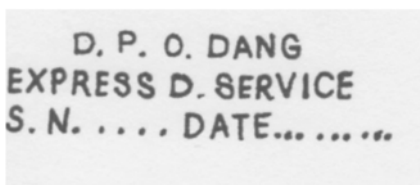
Palpa



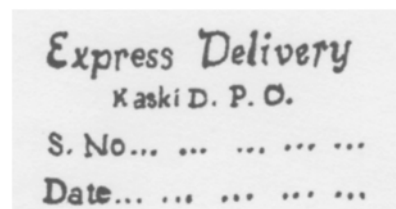
Makawanpur—Type 1



Makawanpur—Type 2



Dang



Kaski

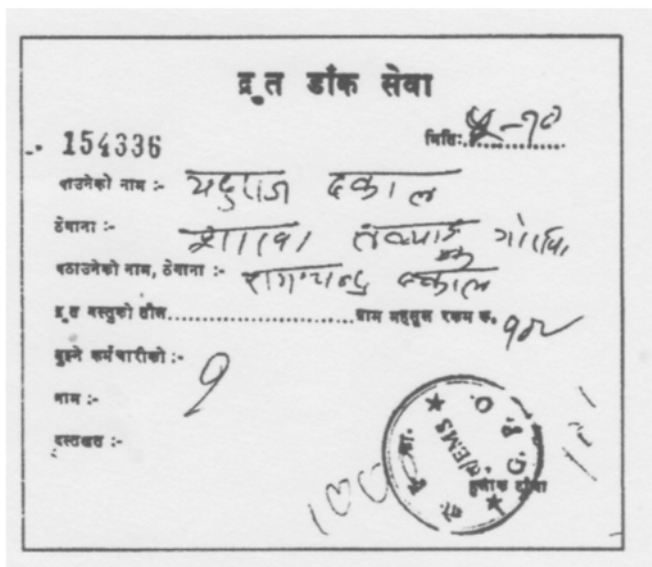
Continued on page 13



Kathmandu G.P.O. is the only office to have a bi-lingual handstamp for use on the Express Mail Service.

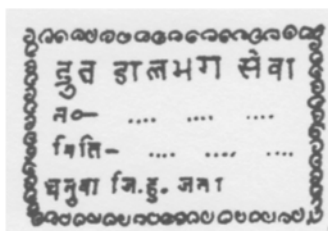


Kathmandu

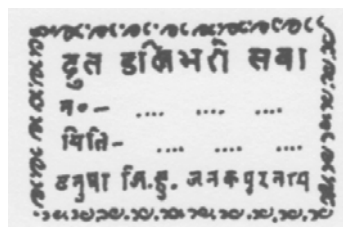


Express Mail receipt from Kathmandu G.P.O.

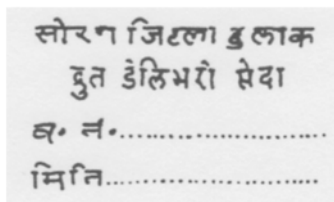
**All Devanagari Cachets**



Dhanusha Type 1



Dhanusha Type 2

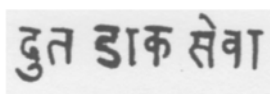


Morang

**Express Delivery Handstamps**

In addition to the cachets used to record the delivery details there is usually another handstamp in Devanagari reading either Express Postal Service or Express Delivery Service or a shortened English version reading EXDEL. This wording can also be found hand written along the top of the envelope.

Express Postal Service

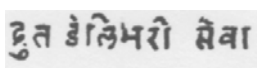


Type 1



Type 2

Express Delivery Service



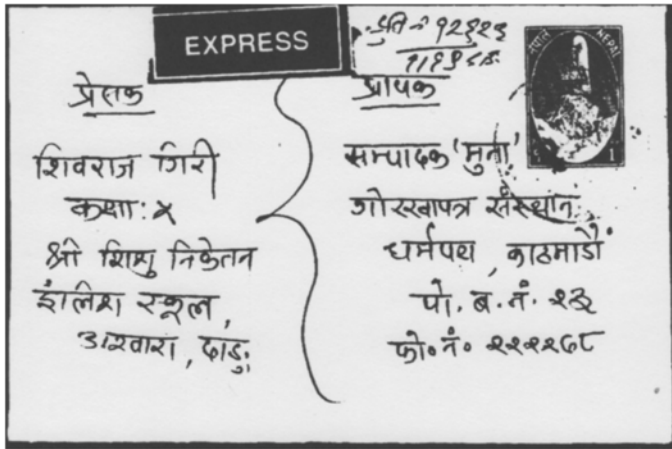
Type 1



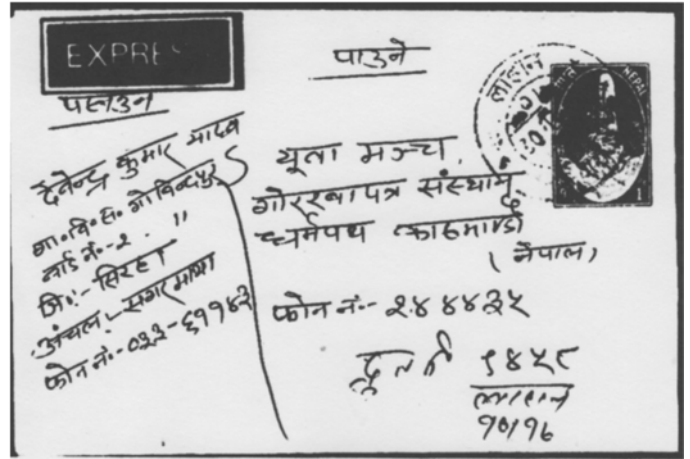
Type 2

Continued on page 14

Express Delivery - Manuscript Markings



Letter sent from Dang P.O. by express delivery with the words 'Express No. 12623' written beside the express label.

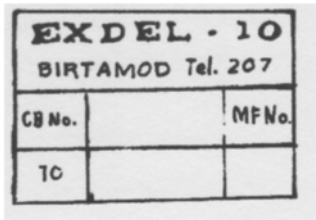


Express delivery letter sent from Laham P.O. with the details written in the lower right corner: 'Express No. 9458'

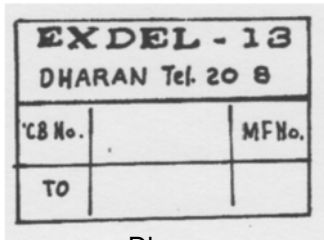
The Private Express Delivery Service

In addition to the post office system, there are also additional private delivery services that are registered with the government. The handstamps used

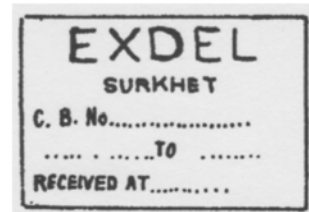
are in English and there is no indication of the cost of using the service.



Birtamod



Dharan



Surkhet



Letter sent from Birtamod to Kathmandu by private delivery service.



Two handstamps Used on a letter from Dharan, from what is probably a different company (prompt Communication Services) from the handstamps illustrated above.



Two slogans were used in July 1993 to advertise the express mail service.

बढी, सस्तो र प्ररप्यो  
काम हुल क त लेदा  
हो मसको नछ

Type A

'A' reads: 'Cheaper, reliable, and faster service is express service'



पाँवरी सवदी र रिदो  
चेपाका सगसि हुलाक दत सेवा

Type B

'B' reads: 'Faster, cheaper, reliable express mail'



Two letters postmarked Kathmandu July 1993 with the different slogans advertising the express mail service.

# Nepal Small Horse and Crown and Crossed Kukirs Postal Cards

By Frank E. Vignola

Nepal's first postal cards were issued in 1887 and printing of this basic design continued through 1922. Van der Wateren's Nepal Postal Stationery gives a thorough description of these cards along with the other Nepalese postal stationery issues. Occasion some new variety of a postal card will come to light. This is not unexpected as there were at least 22 recognized printings and some issues were very limited in number. Around 1904, the size of the postal card was reduced from around 120 mm by 82 mm to 112 mm by 82 mm. Along with the slightly smaller size the left ornament was changed.

From the earliest postal cards, a secondary outer frame line sometimes appears on the postal cards and it has been suggested that this outer frame line was used to guide the trimming of the postal cards. Then in the later issues of the small postal cards (Wa 20 to Wa 22) show clear double

frame lines and do not show any signs of being trimmed. Recently I came across a copy of WA 18 that also showed the double frame line without a sign of the outer selvage being trimmed (see figure). The small postal cards (Wa 16 through Wa 22) are relative rare, so most copies are in the hands of collectors. Of the collections I have been able to view, I have never seen copies of Wa 16, Wa 17, Wa 19, and Wa 20 with double frame lines with extra selvage outside the double frame line. Therefore, I would like to know if others have seen these postal cards with a double frame similar to the figure shown of Postal Card Wa 18.

If you have or have seen such examples, please let me know and I will let the study circle members know any information I receive on the number of examples that exist with double frame lines. My email address is frankvigno@q.com.



Nepalese Postal Card Wa 18 with a double frame line

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## Philatelic interest Nepalese class stamps

In the June 2017 issue of the American Philatelist, there is an informative article on the classic stamps of Nepal. Starting on page 536, the article "Conquering Early Stamps of the Himalayas First Stamps of Nepal Created Both Perforated and Imperforate" by Joseph Iredale is a well written and well put together article on the Classic Stamps of

Nepal.

The classic stamps from the first printing through the telegraph/telephone issues are discussed and described with emphasis on pre 1901 issues. There is also an excellent list of references for those getting started in this phase of Nepalese philately. In addition, the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, gets a nice plug. A must read.